Food Security for Increasing Population in Country

2173. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalised its plan for food security in the context of increasing population in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the manner in which Government propose to achieve food security within the existing paradigm of globalisation and liberalisation?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) An appropriate policy on Food Security in the Country is already under operation. The present policy provides for minimum support prices to the farmers for their produce; procurement by the public agencies of wheat, paddy and coarse grains offered at the minimum support prices; rice as levy at fixed rates; and supply of adequate foodgrains to the States/UTs for distribution through the public distribution system. The policy also envisages maintenance of minimum buffer stocks of rice and wheat in the country on different dates in a year.

(c) EXIM Policy on foodgrains is decided having regard to production, availability and stock position of foodgrains with the Government, in such a way that export of foodgrains does not adversely affect food security of the country.

Widening cap Between Exports and Imports

2174. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been widening of gap between exports and imports;

(b) if so, the trade deficit during 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96;

(c) the factors responsible for increase in trade deficit; and

(d) the steps taken to narrow this widening gap between exports and imports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) As per the available DGCI&S data the trade deficit (the gap between imports & exports) during 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 (Prev.) are placed at US$ 1069 million, US$ 2324 million and US$ 4539 million respectively;

(c) Trade deficit accure when the value of imports are higher than experts. The present trade gap is mainly due to higher imports of essential commodities like petroleum, items of mass consumption like edible oil and higher imports of capital goods, raw material and intermediate goods required for accelerated industrial production and exports.

(d) The key to reducing trade deficit lies in accelerated expert growth. Export promotion measures are continuously being taken by the Government through policy and promotional schemes. These include simplification of Export Import Policy procedures, improving efficiency and competitiveness, focussing on quality and technology upgradation, efforts to actively involve the State Governments in export promotion. Export promotion is a continuing activity based on interaction with industry, trade and other export promotional institutions.

New Aluminium Projects in Orissa

2175. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new Alumina projects being established in Orissa;

(b) whether the process is getting delayed due to pendency of applications

of Orissa Mining Corporation for lease in the Central Government; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to clear the applications quickly so that the new plants come up expeditiously in the national interest?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) The Government have granted permission to M/s Indian Aluminium Company Limited and M/s Larsen and Toubro Limited to set up 1 million tonnes per year each 100% Export Oriented Alumina producing units in the State of Orissa.

(b) and (c) The process of setting up an alumina plant is dependent on a number of factors and activities by the concerned company and the delay cannot be attributed to the grant of Mining Lease as such.

Handling Over of Sukhinda Mines, Orissa

2176. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:
SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have handed over or have decided to hand over chrome rich Sukhinda Mines in Orissa to Mittlas and Jindals; and

(b) the justification thereof and reasons for not inviting NMDC a P.S.U. to develop the same?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) No such proposal is pending with the Central Government. Mineral concessions are granted as per provisions of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and rules made thereunder. Any decision in the instant case by the State of Orissa has to be in accordance with the judgement dated 4.4.1995 of Hon'ble High Court of Orissa in O.J.C. Nos. 7729/93, 4701/94, 3825/94, 5422/94 and 7054/94 and Hon'ble Supreme Court judgement dated 23.7.1996 in S.L.P. Nos. 10838/95, 11391/95, 11392/95 etc.

Impact of Anti-Tobacco Legislation on Employment

2177. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the need to study the impact of anti-tobacco legislation on the employment levels in the country;

(b) if so, steps proposed to study the consequence of anti-tobacco legislation; and

(c) safeguards proposed to protect employment of tobacco workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (c) In the context of the proposed legislation regarding use of tobacco and tobacco products, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have appointed an Expert Committee to go into various aspects of tobacco use including employment aspect.

Free Trade Corridor in Mizoram

2178. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the value and volume of exports and imports from Myanmar through the free trade corridor in Mizoram during last five years;

(b) whether there are reports of arms and illicit drugs being smuggled into the country through this corridor; and

(c) whether similar free trade corridors are proposed to be set up in selected spots along the Bangladesh border to ameliorate the difficulties of the local people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Government have not set up any free trade